



North Carolina Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program

Volunteer Handbook

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Dear LEAP Volunteer:

Welcome to the ranks of NC LEAP Volunteers who are helping to build the future of North Carolina one business at a time!

This handbook is intended to introduce you to NC LEAP and its referral procedures. Once you have become familiar with the information in this handbook, the referral process should be simple.

However, if you have questions, NC LEAP's staff is always available to help you. Thanks for your contribution to low-wealth entrepreneurs and communities across the state.

Sincerely yours,

The Staff and Steering Committee

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I. Introduction to NC LEAP

The concept for NC LEAP was first developed by an attorney in the Young Lawyer's Division of the North Carolina Bar Association. The Business Section of the Bar Association adopted the program followed shortly after by the Corporate Counsel Section. Today NC LEAP leadership comprises members of the Business Law Section, Corporate Counsel Section, and the Public Service Advisory Committee.

NC LEAP is modeled after programs initiated by the American Bar Association's A Business Commitment (ABC) project. This project is predicated on two basic ideas. First, business lawyers are more likely to engage in pro bono legal services in their areas of expertise, rather than in unfamiliar areas of the law. Second, across the country, low-wealth entrepreneurs are working to create jobs and stimulate commercial activity, but lack of access to high-quality, affordable legal services is a key barrier to their success. The goal of the ABC Project is to address this need by encouraging more business lawyers to provide transactional legal services to low-wealth entrepreneurs on a pro bono basis.

NC LEAP will provide direct benefits to individual entrepreneurs, the communities in which they live, and the state far in excess of its cost by leveraging the volunteer time of business lawyers throughout the state. As more and more traditional North Carolina businesses have downsized or closed, the employment base in many rural counties has been decimated. According to the North Carolina Institute for Rural Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs play a powerful role in the economic well-being of rural communities. Today, 95% of all rural establishments have fewer than 50 employees. According to the NC Rural Center, small firms in North Carolina account for nearly all net job growth.

NC LEAP will help fulfill one of the five key elements in building a comprehensive system of entrepreneurship development in North Carolina. Technical assistance and Information is a key element to the success of low-wealth entrepreneurs. Legal assistance is a very specific form of technical assistance and lawyers are the only group capable of filling this need in North Carolina.

II. NC LEAP's Clients

All of LEAP's clients are low-wealth entrepreneurs. To qualify for services provided through LEAP, a prospective client must:

- Satisfy certain financial eligibility guidelines; and
- Be unable to afford legal services, or have income low enough such that paying for legal services would materially impact the ability of the business to succeed.

These guidelines are as follows:

A. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

1. **Basic Income:** Gross income of applicant and resident family members does not exceed 80% of state median income for clients in rural counties or 80% of metropolitan statistical area median income for clients in urban counties as determined in the most recent American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau. However, in instances when the metropolitan statistical area's median income falls below the state median income, the state median income shall be the default income for determining income eligibility. (See Appendix A for current guidelines). Income shall include net proceeds from an existing business in addition to individual and family income.
2. **Priorities:** Priority is given to:
 - Entrepreneurs locating their businesses in a low-wealth community¹;
 - Entrepreneurs that hire and train low-wealth employees;
 - Entrepreneurs with less than five (5) employees.
3. **Other Factors:** Other factors that may be considered to evaluate eligibility include:
 - The viability of the Entrepreneur's business;
 - The ability of the Entrepreneur to have a positive impact on the surrounding community;
 - The area of legal expertise required; and
 - The Entrepreneur's access to other pro bono resources.

B. ASSET ELIGIBILITY

1. **Standards:** Assets of applicant and other resident family members are valued at \$8,000 or less and are not in excess of family needs.
2. **Exclusions from Asset Valuation:** The following are excluded in computing the value of assets:
 - a. Principal residence of applicant;

¹ Low wealth community is defined as a community where the median income is no more than 175% of the federal poverty level.

- b. One automobile per family and any additional automobiles if needed for employment, transportation to medical care, or for similar essential purposes;
- c. Ordinary household goods;
- d. Reasonable equity value of work-related equipment, if the owner is attempting to produce income consistent with the value of the equipment;
- e. Cash value of retirement accounts or annuities, burial or educational trusts or policies;
- f. Assets owned by disabled person which are needed because of the disability; and
- g. Assets owned by the spouse of a victim of domestic violence where a legal separation has been obtained.

C. Exceptions:

- a. NC LEAP may waive ceilings on maximum allowable income and assets in unusual or extremely meritorious situations subject to the approval of the Entrepreneurs Committee of the NC LEAP Steering Committee.
- b. If an eligible client becomes ineligible and the ineligibility is likely to continue so that the client can afford private legal assistance, representation shall be discontinued as long as the discontinuation and the method of discontinuation are not inconsistent with the attorney's professional responsibilities.
- c. A person who is income and asset eligible under these guidelines will not be represented if the legal problem does not come within the priorities of NC LEAP and NC LEAP's case acceptance criteria and/or if there are insufficient legal resources at the time the service is being requested.
- d. A person may be denied legal assistance if there is evidence that the individual misrepresented any information used to ascertain eligibility pursuant to these guidelines.
- e. NC LEAP may, at its sole discretion, choose whether to render services to applicants based on current program priorities, available resources and/or any other factors that may impact the program.

III. How the Referral Program Works

NC LEAP attempts to refer clients who have meritorious civil cases to volunteers. NC LEAP does not accept criminal matters or matters requiring litigation for referral to volunteers. Generally, NC LEAP's staff does not directly handle cases; NC LEAP cases are handled by volunteers. NC LEAP screens each case to ensure that the client is income-eligible and to determine that the claim is meritorious. NC LEAP's staff then contacts prospective volunteers to find a person willing and able to handle the case and to provide high-quality professional services. After the referral is made, the staff periodically contacts the volunteer to determine the status of the case and to ask whether any support services are needed. When the representation is completed, the volunteer is asked to report the hours spent on the representation (a requirement for grant reporting). NC LEAP asks volunteers to complete a Volunteer Enrollment Form (see Appendix B) to

indicate the kinds of cases in which they have a particular interest or expertise. NC LEAP makes every effort to match the volunteer's interest with the client's needs, and, of course, the volunteer may decline any referral. NC LEAP has enough clients to make multiple referrals to volunteers who will handle additional matters.

IV. Malpractice Insurance

Throughout the course of the representation, the volunteer is covered by NC LEAP's professional liability insurance for negligence claims arising from the handling of the NC LEAP matter.

V. Support Services

NC LEAP volunteers are not alone. NC LEAP can assign co-counsel or a mentor, if desired. In addition, law students may also be available to assist attorneys. LEAP offers its volunteers training sessions conducted by experts in various fields of the law. Training seminars will last two hours to three hours and carry with them two (2) CLE credits at a reduced rate if the attorney agrees to accept one (1) client referral and handles the case to completion.

VI. The NC LEAP Mentoring Program

NC LEAP offers a wide range of mentoring services. Whether a volunteer needs guidance and one-on-one assistance through all stages of a case or merely wants someone to discuss case strategy with, NC LEAP has appropriate mentors who are highly regarded in their respective areas of expertise. The NC LEAP mentoring program offers newer attorneys the opportunity to meet and work with these seasoned practitioners. The program also provides a unique opportunity for senior attorneys to share their considerable knowledge and experience and to promote access to high quality *pro bono* representation. A volunteer attorney who would like to work with an NC LEAP mentor should contact the program. If you would like to be an NC LEAP mentor, please complete the NC LEAP Volunteer Enrollment Form (see Appendix B or www.ncbar.org/NCLEAP/volenroll.htm) and return it to NC LEAP.

VII. The Referral Process

The referral process generally works like this:

A. Intake. Clients will be referred to NC LEAP through the Small Business Center Network (SBCN), Legal Aid of NC (LANC) and other microenterprise service centers such as North Carolina Institute for Minority Economic Development (NCIMED), Goodwork, Inc. or Mountain Bizwork. Referring organizations may have conducted some initial income eligibility screening and may have gathered some documents related

to the client's legal issue. (Attached as Appendix A are the current income eligibility guidelines used in this screening process.)

B. Referral to NC LEAP and Additional Screening. The partnering organization then refers the case to NC LEAP. NC LEAP's Director screens again for income eligibility. (S)he then screens for potential legal merit and appropriateness for NC LEAP referral. If necessary, NC LEAP staff contacts the client and gathers additional information and supporting documentation.

C. Referral to Volunteer. NC LEAP staff then contacts potential volunteers (directly or through NC LEAP's designated "Contact Persons" in certain firms) and asks the volunteer to accept the case. (Of course, volunteers may contact NC LEAP and request a referral at any time.) Every effort is made to match the volunteer with the particular type of case that he or she requests. New volunteers are asked to complete NC LEAP's Volunteer Enrollment Form (attached as Appendix B).

D. Conflicts Checks. NC LEAP staff provides potential volunteers with a case summary, the client's initials and the NC LEAP case number *only* before conflicts are cleared. After conflicts clear, the staff provides additional relevant information from the NC LEAP file to the attorney with the confirmation of referral (see E below). If requested, the potential volunteer may request the additional relevant information in the NC LEAP file before accepting the case, but not before conflicts have cleared.

E. Confirmation of Referral. Once a volunteer accepts a case, NC LEAP sends letters to the clients and the volunteer confirming the referral. Generally, the client's letter (Appendix D) tells the client the name and telephone number of the volunteer, and informs the client that if he or she fails to contact the volunteer attorney within 7 days, he or she may be disqualified from the program. If the client does not contact the volunteer within 7 days, NC LEAP asks the volunteer to send a letter (Appendix E) to the client, reminding the client that he or she must contact the lawyer right away, so that the lawyer can represent the client effectively. The volunteer's letter and Case Referral Form (Appendices F and G) contain information about the client and the facts of the case.

F. Status Report. NC LEAP also asks the volunteer to complete a short status report one month after the referral is made and every three months thereafter (Appendices H and I).

G. Referral Incomplete/Not Accepted. If the volunteer is unable to handle the case for any reason, he or she should contact the responsible NC LEAP staff member by telephone immediately.

1. If the volunteer decides not to handle a case when it is first referred, the volunteer should return the entire referral packet to NC LEAP.
2. If the volunteer is willing to handle the case, but the client does not contact the volunteer after the attorney mails a *please call* letter (Appendix E), the volunteer should complete a Closing Form (Appendix I), showing as the reason for case closure, "Client

Did Not Follow Through.” The Closing Form (Appendix I) should be returned to NC LEAP.

3. If after interviewing the client and reviewing the case, the volunteer has doubts about the client’s eligibility or the merits of the case or has any other concerns, the volunteer should contact the responsible NC LEAP staff person. If the volunteer decides not to handle the case, the Closing Form (Appendix I) should be returned to NC LEAP, showing the appropriate reason for case closure.

H. Referral Complete/Representation Agreement. Once the attorney agrees to represent the client, the client and attorney must enter into a written agreement concerning the representation (Appendix J). This makes the respective responsibilities clear and fulfills any obligations that may exist under the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct. Attorneys may use their own representation agreement or NC LEAP’s (Appendix J) and send a copy to NC LEAP.

I. Costs and Expenses. Filing fees, out-of-pocket expenses and external costs associated with handling the business transaction are paid by the client. **Clients are told by NC LEAP before their cases are referred that they must have the money to cover these costs.** Volunteers or their firms may choose to absorb the cost of certain out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with the handling of an NC LEAP matter. If you choose to cover those costs, the money may be tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

J. Closing Form. After the case has been accepted, handled and closed, the volunteer should complete the Closing Form. (Appendix I.)

K. Ongoing Relationship with Clients. NC LEAP hopes that clients are successful in their business endeavors and become ineligible for our services based on the success of their businesses. Should a participating law firm or volunteer attorney decide to continue their business relationship with a former NC LEAP client, it is within the firm’s or attorney’s discretion. The firm or attorney would need to make arrangements for continued representation and payment.

L. Ongoing Relationship with NC LEAP. NC LEAP hopes that you enjoy your experience so much that you contact NC LEAP and request another referral upon completion of the case.

VIII. NC LEAP and Volunteer’s Responsibility

These are some of the responsibilities of NC LEAP and the volunteer attorney in the referral process:

NC LEAP’s Responsibilities

- (1) Interview client
- (2) Determine financial eligibility
- (3) Determine if the client’s problem can/should be handled by NC LEAP

- (4) Screen the case for potential legal merit
- (5) Gather additional information and supporting documentation
- (6) Refer the case to a volunteer
- (7) Inform the client and referring agency of the referral
- (8) Monitor case and provide backup assistance and advice
- (9) Track cases and their outcomes
- (10) Arrange free or low-cost support services
- (11) Coordinate CLE training programs (Appendix K) and materials
- (12) Recruit volunteers
- (13) Handle complaints from attorneys and clients

Volunteer's Responsibilities

- (1) Accept a case referred by NC LEAP
- (2) Discuss with the client the extent of the representation that the volunteer agrees to undertake on the client's behalf
- (3) Complete the acknowledgement receipt, sign and return it to NC LEAP
- (4) Complete a Volunteer Enrollment Form and return it to NC LEAP
- (5) Handle the case in a timely and professional manner
- (6) Keep NC LEAP advised of any problems encountered
- (7) Request training, a mentor, co-counsel or other support as necessary to provide competent representation
- (8) Complete and return the Status/Closing Form one month after receiving the referral, and every three months thereafter until the case is closed.

IX. NC LEAP's Staff

NC LEAP's permanent staff at this time includes a Director who is supported by a cadre of attorney volunteers. Look for LEAP to be growing as time goes on!

Contact Information:
NC LEAP
8000 Weston Parkway
Cary, North Carolina 27513
(p) 919-677-0561 ext. 342
(f) 919-657-1585
ncleap@ncbar.org

X. NC LEAP's Steering Committee

NC LEAP's Steering Committee is made up of members of the Business Section, corporate counsel, public interest, and liaisons to community organizations. All appointments to the Steering Committee are approved by the Chair and are confirmed by the NC LEAP Steering Committee.

XI. Questions, Problems, Complaints, Suggestions

Being an NC LEAP volunteer should be a rewarding experience. If you have questions or have trouble along the way, NC LEAP's staff is available to help you. Our door is always open!

XII. Program Funding

A. Donations. NC LEAP is self-sustaining project in the North Carolina Bar Association Foundation, which is a not-for-profit corporation organized under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is funded primarily by law firms and corporations, and also receives in-kind support from the North Carolina Bar Association Foundation. Other sources of income include individual donor contributions.

Should you wish to make a financial contribution to NC LEAP, or if you have contacts at foundations or corporations, please contact NC LEAP's Director.

B. Solicitation. NC LEAP has a strict no-solicitation policy. Should an NC LEAP client ask for assistance on any other matter, besides the one assigned to you as a volunteer, please contact NC LEAP.

XIII. Conclusion

Your involvement in NC LEAP is essential—to our program, to the legal community, and most of all, to the low-income entrepreneurs in North Carolina who will benefit from your willingness to help. We appreciate your help and so do they. Your dedication, effort, and expertise are vital to NC LEAP's ability to help its clients.

As an NC LEAP volunteer, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped people in search of a better life for themselves, their families, and communities. You will also have the recognition and thanks of NC LEAP, the North Carolina Bar Association/Foundation and the legal community.

If you believe you have a story others would like to hear about, let us know and we will try to include it in our Annual Report or other publications

Thank you for being a part of NC LEAP!

Appendix A

2009 NC LEAP Small Business Owner(s) Income and Asset Guidelines²

Rural County Income Limits			
Number of Household Members	State Median Income	Federal Poverty Level	NC LEAP's Income Guidelines (80% of state median)
1 person	\$23,732	\$10,400	\$23,732.00
2 people	\$51,172	\$14,000	\$40,937.60
3 people	\$55,709	\$17,600	\$44,567.20
4 or more people	\$66,198	\$21,200	\$52,958.40
Each Additional Person	\$3,480.00	\$3,600.00	+ \$2,784.00

Urban County Income Limits		
Number of Household Members	Mecklenburg MSA Median Income	NC LEAP's Income Guidelines (80% of MSA median)
1 person	\$27,968	\$22,374.40
2 people	\$52,418	\$41,934.40
3 people	\$58,056	\$46,444.80
4 or more people	\$67,430	\$53,944.00
Number of Household Members	Wake MSA Median Income	NC LEAP's Income Guidelines (80% of MSA median)
1 person	\$30,249	\$24,199.20
2 people	\$61,086	\$48,868.80
3 people	\$65,978	\$52,782.40
4 or more people	\$74,306	\$59,444.80
Number of Household Members	Durham MSA Median Income	NC LEAP's Income Guidelines (80% of MSA Median)
1 person	\$30,315	\$24,252.00
2 people	\$53,020	\$42,416.00
3 people	\$59,857	\$47,885.60
4 or more people	\$59,496	\$47,596.80

² Median incomes determined using the American Community Survey, an annual economic indicator project of the United States Census Bureau.

Each Additional Person	\$3,480.00	+ \$2,784.00

Urban County Income Limits		
Number of Household Members	Greensboro MSA Median Income	NC LEAP's Income Guidelines (80% of MSA median)
1 person	\$21,893	\$17,514.00
2 people	\$45,848	\$36,678.40
3 people	\$53,910	\$43,128.00
4 or more people	\$61,274	\$49,019.20
Number of Household Members	Wilmington MSA Median Income	NC LEAP's Income Guidelines (80% of MSA median)
1 person	\$21,795	\$17,436.00
2 people	\$45,735	\$36,588.00
3 people	\$48,913	\$39,130.40
4 or more people	\$65,526	\$52,420.80
Each Additional Person	\$3,480.00	+ \$2,784.00

Note: When the metropolitan statistical area median income falls below the state median income, the program will use the state median income guidelines.

Asset Eligibility – Applicants for NC LEAP's services will generally retain less than \$8,000.00 in personal savings. In determining an applicant's assets for eligibility purposes, NC LEAP does not consider the home in which you reside, a vehicle(s) necessary for employment, personal belongings (i.e. furniture), cash value of retirement accounts or annuities and reasonable equitable value of work-related equipment.

Appendix B

NC LEAP ATTORNEY VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for NC LEAP. There are many ways in which you can use your time and talent to benefit low-wealth entrepreneurs in North Carolina through our program. Completing this interest questionnaire will assist NC LEAP in providing you with volunteer opportunities that best suit your needs and abilities.

Date: _____

Volunteer Name: _____

Firm/Corporation Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax #: _____

E-Mail: _____

Are you currently licensed to practice law in North Carolina? Yes No

License number: _____

Year Admitted to Practice: _____

How many hours a year would you like to volunteer for NC LEAP? _____

Main Practice Concentration(s): _____

Do you speak any languages other than English? (Please list) _____

I am interested in (please check all that apply):

Accepting cases

Mentoring a new attorney

- NC LEAP Steering Committee Mentoring a law student
- Staffing community education legal clinics
- Serving on a subcommittee of the NC LEAP Steering Committee
- Editing or developing community education legal materials
- Providing community education legal workshops
- (Firms Only)** Partnering with Corporate Counsel
- Donating to NC LEAP (Checks payable to NCBA Foundation)
I am enclosing my tax-deductible gift of \$_____ for NC LEAP. Or
My firm is making a gift of \$_____ for NC LEAP.

Appendix C

(Date)
Client's Information
Dear Client's Name:

We have determined that you qualify for NC LEAP's services.

The lawyer who will represent you is:

Volunteer's Information

You should call this lawyer at (**Volunteer's Telephone Number**) within seven (7) days. If you do not do so, he or she may not decide to help you. Although you will not have to pay for the lawyer's work, you may have to pay some court costs. The lawyer will tell you how much these costs will be. If you cannot pay the costs, please tell your lawyer. If your financial status changes during the time your lawyer is representing you, please tell NC LEAP and your lawyer.

If you have any questions or if you have trouble connecting with your lawyer, please call me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Tarek Azhari, Director

cc: Volunteer's Name, Esquire

Appendix D

Volunteer's Letterhead

SAMPLE LETTER

{Date}

Client's Name

Client's Address

Re: NC LEAP Representation – NC LEAP Case Number

Dear Client's Name:

I am the attorney who has agreed to take your (Insert type of case, e.g. divorce custody...) case on a *pro bono* basis through NC LEAP.

On (Insert date of client letter), you were sent a letter that told you to contact me as soon as possible; however, I have not heard from you. I need to speak with you right away so that I can represent you effectively.

Please contact me immediately at (insert your number), so that we can schedule an appointment. I cannot represent you unless you get in touch with me. If you no longer need a lawyer, please call and let me know.

If I do not hear from you within 10 days, I will assume that you no longer need representation, and I will close your file in this office. I will also inform NC LEAP that you have not contacted me, and NC LEAP may disqualify you from receiving legal assistance through their program.

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

(Insert your name)

cc: NC LEAP

Appendix E

{DATE}

Volunteer's Information

Firm

Address

Re: **Client's Information**

NC LEAP File #

Dear Volunteer:

Thank you again for agreeing to take the above client's case on a pro bono basis from NC LEAP. By taking this referral, you have agreed to give this client the same degree of professional care and attention that you give your fee-paying clients. At the conclusion of the case, you will receive an acknowledgement of your contribution of any unreimbursed expenses to the program, which may be claimed as a charitable contribution for income tax purposes.

We ask that you "bill" us from time to time (at least once every three months), showing how many hours you have donated at what cost and giving us a short narrative description of the services you provided; we will send you a form which you can complete and return to us. This not only helps us keep track of our cases, but also helps us recognize your contributions to the program.

We are here to serve you; our job is to make your job easier. NC LEAP is, above all else, a partnership. We look forward to being of service to you as you volunteer your services to those who are unable to afford them.

Thank you for your **help in building low-wealth communities in our state.**

Sincerely,

Tarek Azhari, Director (919)677-0561 x 342

PLEASE SIGN, DATE AND RETURN THIS LETTER TO
ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS REFERRAL. MAKE SURE TO
KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS. BY SIGNING THIS
REFERRAL, I AM ALSO CERTIFYING THAT I AM AN ACTIVE
STATUS ATTORNEY IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

NAME: _____ STATE BAR # _____

DATE: _____

Enclosures: Acknowledgement for return to NC LEAP

Attorney/Client Agreement

Referred: (Date of Referral)

Client: Client's Name

Case number : NC LEAP File Number

APPENDIX F



North Carolina Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program

Small Business Application for Legal Services

NC LEAP requires the following information from its prospective clients. All information will remain confidential. Please print and fill out the form as completely as possible. **We will not be able to consider your application unless you provide *all* requested information.**

Completing an application does not automatically qualify your business for legal assistance. NC LEAP retains complete discretion as to which applicants it accepts. **NC LEAP does not accept cases for litigation.** Please keep a copy of this application for your files.

Return your completed application to:

**NC LEAP
PO Box 3688
Cary, NC 27519
Fax: 919-657-1585**

I. Individual Information (Complete this section separately for each individual business owner. Attach individual sheets if necessary.):

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last First

Social Security Number: _____

Home Address: _____

City State Zip Code

Home Phone () _____ Cell Phone () _____

Race/Ethnicity (circle one): African-American Asian/Pacific Islander
Caucasian Latino Native American Other

Gender: ____ Male ____ Female

Number of Household Members: Adults ____ Children ____

Gross Household Income \$ _____ month/year (please circle one)

Source(s) of Income: Please check all that apply

____ Work (other than business described in Part II)

____ Income from business described in Part II

____ Unemployment benefits

____ Public Assistance

____ Other _____

(Please describe)

Assets: Cash \$ _____

Bank Accounts \$ _____

Other \$ _____

II. Business Information

Business Name: _____

Business Address: _____

Business Phone () _____ Facsimile () _____

Email: _____

Business Status (Please select one):

____ Start up (not yet in business)

____ Existing Business Year Established ____ Year Acquired ____

Type of Business (Please select one):

Retail Service Manufacturing

Construction Wholesale

Other (specify) _____

For existing businesses, please identify your form (circle one)

Sole Proprietorship Partnership Corporation (C or S) LLC LLP

Please provide information for estimated business income and assets:

What is your business average monthly gross income? _____

What is your business average monthly net profit? _____

What is the value of your business assets? _____

Current Number of Hired Individuals (including owners, employees and independent contractors):

Owner(s): Full Time ____ Part Time ____

Employee(s): Full Time ____ Part Time ____

Contractor(s): Full Time ____ Part Time ____

Projected number of individuals your business expects to hire within the next year:

Employee(s): Full Time ____ Part Time ____

Contractor(s): Full Time ____ Part Time ____

1. What type of assistance are you seeking?

Contract Draft/Review Entity Formation

Employment Advice Lease Draft/Review

Intellectual Property General Business Advice

Other _____

Describe the legal assistance you are seeking in as much detail as possible. For instance, if you are seeking assistance with contract or lease review, please describe the contract or lease you need assistance with and attach a

4. Have you ever applied for NC LEAP's services in the past? _____
If so when? _____

5. Please list any special needs, such as the use of an interpreter or accommodations for persons with disabilities.

6. How did you hear about NC LEAP?
- Agency (please name) _____
 - Attorney
 - Advertisement/Newspaper
 - Former Client
 - Friend
 - Other

Final Application Checklist

Please include the following documents with your application. In addition, enclose any other documents that may assist North Carolina Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program in assessing your application including copies of all documents related to the specific legal problem(s) of your business.

- Completed, signed application form.
- Copy of a Business Plan, *if available*.
- Copy of your individual tax return for the most recent year. We cannot open your case without this information.

___ Copy of your business return for the most recent year if your business is already formed.

___ Copy of any documents related to your legal request.

Authorization, Release & Verification

Application Information: I hereby authorize NC LEAP, and its agents and employees, to verify, disclose and make copies of any and all information provided in this Application in the course of determining eligibility and in securing an attorney.

Release: I hereby release any person or entity complying with this authorization from any and all claims relating to the disclosure of any such information and documents.

Acknowledgement: I hereby authorize NC LEAP, and its agents and employees to use non-identifying information regarding my application for legal services, the legal services which I receive for the purposes of reporting, program evaluation or otherwise, as necessary.

Validity: A copy of this Authorization shall be as valid as the original.

The undersigned hereby certifies that all of the information in this application is true, correct, and complete and that he/she is authorized by the business and all its owners to submit this application to NC LEAP. The applicant further agrees to notify NC LEAP in the event of any changes to this information and understands and agrees that NC LEAP has the right to reject any applicant or withdraw from representing a client that submits an application with inaccurate information.

Print Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX G

NC LEAP INITIAL STATUS REPORT

Date:

Dear _____:

We would be grateful if you would answer these questions regarding the following referral:

Client:

Date Referred:

1. I have undertaken representation of the client.

Yes _____ No _____

If not, why not?

2. Brief summary of action taken to date:

(Use additional space if needed)

3. Brief summary of further intended action on this matter:

4. Approximate number of hours spent on case: _____

Volunteer's Name & Address

Thank you for your generous and continued support. If you have changed firms, address or telephone number, please let us know.

Mail or Fax to: NC LEAP
PO Box 3688
Cary, NC 27519
(p) 919-677-0561
(f) 919-657-1585

STATUS REPORT AND/OR CLOSING FORM

Date:

Dear _____:

NC LEAP tracks the status of each case we refer at regular intervals. Please complete and return this form as soon as possible by fax (919-657-1585), or by mail (NC LEAP PO Box 3688 Cary, NC 27519). **(This form can also be sent electronically at your request.)** If you have any questions, please call 919-677-0561 x 342.

Client:

Date Referred:

NC LEAP File #:

1. Is the case open?

If open, what is the status of the case and when do you expect to close it?

If closed, what is the main reason it was closed? (please check one) Approximately how many hours did you spend on the case?

CLIENT UNCOOPERATIVE/WITHDREW

OTHER

COUNSEL AND ADVICE

RESOLVED WITH LITIGATION

INTERVIEWED & PREPARED DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED WITHOUT LITIGATION

2. When can you accept another case?

3. Do you want NC LEAP to submit your name to Probono.net (please visit www.probono.net)?

____ YES ____ NO

4. Please tell us how you feel about working with NC LEAP.

Volunteer's name, address (please print) and DATE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT OF NC LEAP!

Appendix I

North Carolina Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program

REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT

This Agreement for civil legal representation and services is between _____, a volunteer with the NC Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (NC LEAP), hereafter called the "Legal Representative," and _____, hereafter called the "Client."

The Client hereby authorizes the Legal Representative and NC LEAP to represent the Client in the civil legal matter described as follows:

The Client also authorizes the Legal Representative to obtain any information or documents necessary for such representation, and to assist the Legal Representative in obtaining all of the facts for the case. The Legal Representative agrees to give the Client zealous representation in the above-described legal matter. The Legal Representative's obligations under this Agreement end after the matter has received a final adjudication in the current legal forum, although the Legal Representative may choose, upon consultation with NC LEAP, to take appropriate further steps in the matter at the Client's request.

* * * * *

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS AS A CLIENT:

1. To be kept informed about any important developments in my case.
2. To be consulted before any significant decision is made on my behalf, and to be given sufficient information to make an informed decision.
3. To be consulted on any settlement proposal on my case before the matter is settled by my Legal Representative.
4. To have information regarding my case kept confidential. However, I recognize that my Legal Representative may discuss certain facts of my case with individuals at NC LEAP and with others to the extent that it is necessary for representation in this case.

AS A CLIENT I PROMISE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. To inform my Legal Representative of any change in my address or telephone number.
2. To inform my Legal Representative of any change in my income or assets.
3. To keep all of my appointments (in person or by telephone) with my Legal Representative unless I have called in advance to cancel the appointment.
4. To pay any filing fees or fees associated with handling the matter outlined in this agreement which are not fees for the legal services I am receiving.
5. To avoid communications with opposing parties or opposing counsel without prior consultation with my Legal Representative.

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE'S OBLIGATIONS:

1. To keep the Client informed of what is being done about the Client's case and to consult with the Client before any significant decision is made on the Client's behalf.
2. To represent the Client free of charge, accepting no attorneys' fees from the Client. If the Client is able to pay, he/she will have to pay any court fees and fees for obtaining documents, unless those fees can be waived. Any attorneys' fees that may be awarded by the court and/or paid by the opposing party in this representation will be distributed in accordance with the NC LEAP Attorneys' Fees Policy then in effect.

TERMINATION OF REPRESENTATION:

1. The Client is free to request that the Legal Representative cease representing him or her at any time for any reason, subject to necessary court approval. In the event of dismissal of a Legal Representative by the Client, NC LEAP does not guarantee that another Legal Representative will be found.
2. The Legal Representative may cease representation of the Client, subject to necessary court approval, under the following circumstances: (a) further representation would be useless or unreasonable, or would not help to achieve the Client's objectives; (b) the Client is no longer financially eligible for services through NC LEAP; (c) the Client has failed to cooperate in the representation; or (d) when otherwise mandated or allowed by the Rules of Professional Conduct.
3. NC LEAP may close, withdraw from or dismiss the Client's case, subject to the necessary court approval and consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct, if: (1) the legal service it has agreed to provide is completed or if, in NC LEAP's reasonable opinion, further representation would not benefit the Client; (2) the Client is found to have misrepresented or concealed facts concerning the case; (3) the Client refuses to obey a court order that the Legal Representative has advised the Client to obey; or (4) the financial circumstances upon which the Client was accepted by NC LEAP change significantly.

I have received a copy of this Agreement.

Client _____ Date _____

Legal Representative _____ Date _____